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6 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
7 **DISTRICT OF NEVADA**

8 GERALD KEITH TAYLOR,

Case No.: 2:18-cv-02004-KJD-NJK

9 Petitioner

ORDER

10 v.

11 WARDEN BRIAN WILLIAMS, et al.,

12 Respondents
13

14 Petitioner Gerald Keith Taylor has submitted a 28 U.S.C. § 2254 habeas corpus petition
15 (ECF No. 1-1). His application to proceed in forma pauperis is granted. The court has reviewed
16 the petition pursuant to Habeas Rule 4, and it shall be docketed and served on respondents.
17 Taylor has also filed a motion for stay and abeyance in accordance with *Rhines v. Weber* pending
18 the conclusion of his state proceedings (ECF No. 3).

19 In *Rhines v. Weber*, 544 U.S. 269 (2005), the Supreme Court placed limitations upon the
20 discretion of the court to facilitate habeas petitioners' return to state court to exhaust claims. The
21 *Rhines* Court stated:

22 [S]tay and abeyance should be available only in limited circumstances.
23 Because granting a stay effectively excuses a petitioner's failure to present his
claims first to the state courts, stay and abeyance is only appropriate when the
district court determines there was good cause for the petitioner's failure to

1 exhaust his claims first in state court. Moreover, even if a petitioner had good
2 cause for that failure, the district court would abuse its discretion if it were to
3 grant him a stay when his unexhausted claims are plainly meritless. *Cf.* 28 U.S.C.
4 § 2254(b)(2) (“An application for a writ of habeas corpus may be denied on the
5 merits, notwithstanding the failure of the applicant to exhaust the remedies
6 available in the courts of the State”).

7 *Rhines*, 544 U.S. at 277.

8 The Court went on to state that, “[I]t likely would be an abuse of discretion for a district
9 court to deny a stay and to dismiss a mixed petition if the petitioner had good cause for his
10 failure to exhaust, his unexhausted claims are potentially meritorious, and there is no indication
11 that the petitioner engaged in intentionally dilatory litigation tactics.” *Id.* at 278.

12 Thus, the court may stay a petition containing both exhausted and unexhausted claims if:

13 (1) the habeas petitioner has good cause; (2) the unexhausted claims are potentially meritorious;
14 and (3) petitioner has not engaged in dilatory litigation tactics. *Rhines*, 544 U.S. at 277;

15 *Gonzalez v. Wong*, 667 F.3d 965, 977–80 (9th Cir. 2011). “[G]ood cause turns on whether the
16 petitioner can set forth a reasonable excuse, supported by sufficient evidence, to justify [the
17 failure to exhaust a claim in state court].” *Blake v. Baker*, 745 F.3d 977, 982 (9th Cir. 2014).

18 “While a bald assertion cannot amount to a showing of good cause, a reasonable excuse,
19 supported by evidence to justify a petitioner's failure to exhaust, will.” *Id.* An indication that the
20 standard is not particularly stringent can be found in *Pace v. DiGuglielmo*, 544 U.S. 408 (2005),
21 where the Supreme Court stated that: “[a] petitioner’s reasonable confusion about whether a state
22 filing would be timely will ordinarily constitute ‘good cause’ to excuse his failure to exhaust.”

23 *Pace*, 544 U.S. at 416 (citing *Rhines*, 544 U.S. at 278). *See also Jackson v. Roe*, 425 F.3d 654,
661-62 (9th Cir. 2005) (the application of an “extraordinary circumstances” standard does not
comport with the “good cause” standard prescribed by *Rhines*).

1 While not entirely clear, it appears that petitioner has returned to state court to pursue a
2 newly-discovered claim and that if he prevails in state court his federal petition would likely be
3 moot. Accordingly, the court shall grant the motion for stay. Taylor will need to file a motion to
4 re-open the case after his state proceedings have concluded.

5 **IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED** that petitioner's application to proceed in forma
6 pauperis (ECF No. 1) is **GRANTED**.

7 **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the Clerk **shall file and ELECTRONICALLY**
8 **SERVE** the petition (ECF No. 1-1) on the respondents. No response or other action by
9 respondents is required until further order by this court.

10 **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the Clerk shall add Adam Paul Laxalt, Nevada
11 Attorney General, as counsel for respondents.

12 **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the motion for stay and abeyance (ECF No. 3) is
13 **GRANTED**.

14 **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that this action is **STAYED** pending final resolution of
15 petitioner's state proceedings.

16 **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the grant of a stay is conditioned upon petitioner
17 returning to federal court with a motion to reopen the case within **45 days** of the issuance of the
18 remittitur by the Supreme Court of Nevada, at the conclusion of any state court proceedings.

19 **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the Clerk **SHALL ADMINISTRATIVELY**
20 **CLOSE** this action, until such time as the court grants a motion to reopen the matter.

21 Dated: January 2, 2019

22 

23 KENT J. DAWSON
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE